

BOYER RANCH (Lamb Ranch), GILBERT'S ROOT CELLAR  
44 miles east of Fallon, Nevada on  
Highway 50, 54 miles north on  
Dixie Valley Road  
Fallon vicinity  
Churchill County  
Nevada

HABS No. NV-20-B

HABS  
NEV,  
I-FALL.V,  
I-B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

BOYER RANCH (Lamb Ranch), GILBERT'S ROOT CELLAR

HABS NO. NV-20-B

Location: 44 miles east of Fallon, Churchill County, Nevada on Highway 50, 54 miles north on Dixie Valley Road

USGS Humboldt Salt Marsh Quadrangle (15'),  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 11-424825-4423225

Significance: The stone cellar was erected by the Gilbert Brothers ca. 1860 - 1868. Nevada Place Names states that Dixie Valley was settled by southern sympathizers in 1861 and in that same year the second gold strike in the territory was made in Cottonwood Canyon. The mining town of Bolivia was quickly established in the Canyon about three miles northwest of this structure. At about the same time an above ground building of similar construction was built about 41 feet to the north. While not the work of a master builder they are examples of vernacular architecture and embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. Modifications and rehabilitation without regard for accepted standards have diminished their integrity but they still convey the essence of their historic past.

Description: The earth-sheltered structure has interior dimensions of 10' 10" by 14' 9" with walls extending six feet above a compacted earth floor. The walls were made of dry-laid rubble from the alluvial fan on which the structure is located. Mud plaster coated the walls which was then painted white.

The roof is supported by a single cottonwood log resting on the door lintel and the back wall. Cottonwood vigas then spanned from side walls to the central beam. Maximum height to the ceiling is 7' 4". Hooked rugs, rags, and newspapers were added to plug gaps left by the vigas and soil was then used to cover the roof. A board vent penetrated the roof and extended to a height of 7' 4" above the soil cover. The original door and hinges have been replaced with more modern types. Mr. Lamb also repaired the roof after he acquired the property. He replaced the broken center beam and a few of the vigas.

The cellar was built by digging a hole approximately four feet deep, erecting the walls and roof, then backfill

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leaving a mound about four feet high.

HISTORY:

Sheldon Lamb states that the root cellar and it's associated stone building were built in 1866 by the Gilbert brothers as a base camp for a mine they were working in the Stillwater Range about five miles north of the ranch. Mrs. Lamb claims that they were built in 1860 or 1861. Neither date nor construction by the Gilbert's has been confirmed. The earliest record for the property is December 23, 1909 when the Governor signed the patent. The patent #6664 was recorded on November 27, 1914 in the name of Alva Boyer. The BLM office in Carson City has no records of the property before Desert Land Entry in 1861 or prior to statehood when control of the land was transferred to the state. There is no evidence of anyone associated with the ranch having had a significant role in the history of Nevada. The Lamb's purchased the ranch in 1966 and the U. S. Navy purchased it in December 1986 under a program to buy property from those owners wishing to relocate from under the Navy's Supersonic Operations Area. Future plans call for abandoning the structures and issuing agricultural outleases on the land.

SOURCES:

Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon Lamb  
Northern Nevada Title Company, Fallon, Nevada  
Bureau of Land Management, Carson City, Nevada  
Nevada Place Homes  
History of Nevada, 1881 reproduced by Thompson and West in 1958

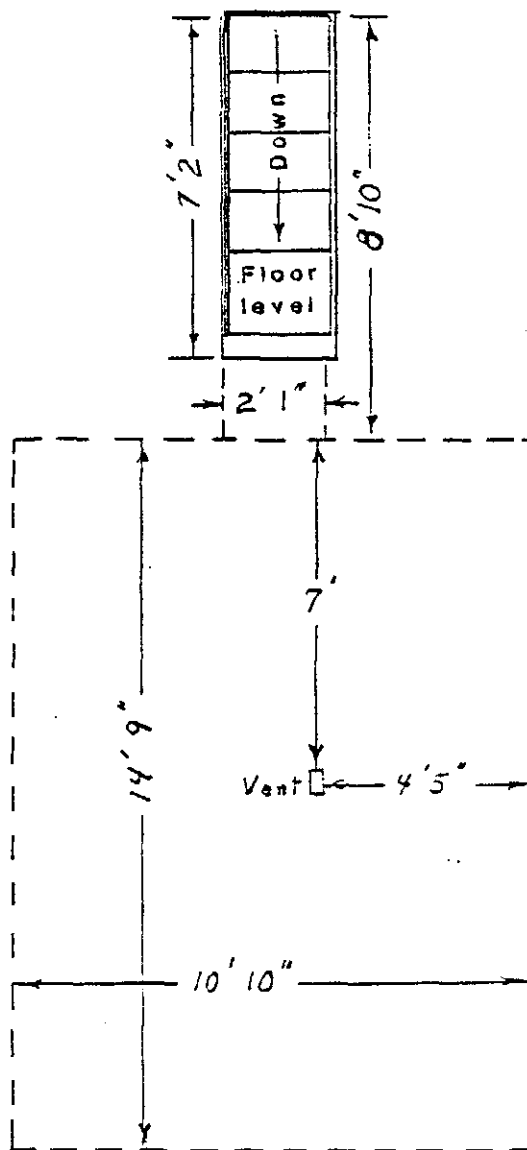
HISTORIAN:

W. E. Frazier, Public Works Department, Naval Air Station, Fallon, Nevada

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S 65° E

Top of vent to soil cover - 7' 4"  
 Top of vent to bottom of vent - 9' 6"  
 Height of interior walls - 6'  
 Height of roof at the peak - 7' 4"

Center of vent of Root Cellar bears N53° 53' 48"W 1635.38 feet from the West  
 1/16 corner between sections 7 and 18, T24 N R 37 E

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